

*Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari*

## Intimate Conversations with God

*(Munajat)*



In the agony suffered for you,  
 the wounded find the scent of balm:  
 The memory of you consoles the souls of lovers.  
 Thousands in every corner, seeking a glimpse of you,  
 cry out like Moses, "Lord, show me yourself!"<sup>1</sup>  
 I see thousands of lovers lost in a desert of grief,  
 wandering aimlessly and saying hopefully,  
 "O God! O God!"  
 I see breasts scorched by the burning separation from you;  
 I see eyes weeping in love's agony.  
 Dancing down the lane of blame and censure,  
 your lovers cry out, "Poverty is my source of pride!"<sup>2</sup>  
 Pir-i Ansar<sup>3</sup> has quaffed the wine of longing:  
 Like Majnun<sup>4</sup> he wanders drunk and perplexed  
 through the world.

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O God,  
 You are merciful in your might,  
 You are glorious in your beauty.  
 You are not needful of space,  
 You require not time.  
 No one resembles you;  
 You resemble no one.  
 It is evident that you are in the soul—  
 Nay, rather the soul lives by something which you are.

O God,  
 You subsist through your own grace.  
 Only you are capable of rendering thanks to yourself.  
 You are close to the knowledge of those who know you,  
 But you are far from what we imagine you to be.

O God,  
 To praise you for your greatness is a means to happiness,  
 But to open our mouths in thanks for your beneficence  
 raises us to the level of pride.

O God,  
 When you brand a heart with your love,  
 You scatter its heap of being to the winds of nonexistence.

O God,  
 Whosoever comes to know you  
 And raises the banner of your love  
 Will cast off all that is other than you.



What use has he of his soul who has known you?  
What use has he of offspring and family?  
When you drive one mad,  
You give him both this world and the next:  
What use has the madman for this world or the next?

O God,  
When I look upon you,  
I see myself a king among kings,  
A crown on my head.  
When I look upon myself,  
I see myself among the humble,  
Dust on my head.<sup>5</sup>

O God,  
I have wasted my life  
And sown injustice to my body.

O God,  
In our head we have intoxication by you,  
In our heart we have your mysteries,  
On our tongue we have your poetry.

O God,  
If we speak, we speak praise of you.  
If we seek, we seek your pleasure.

O God,  
Of this world and the next I have chosen to love you:  
I have put on coarse garments  
And I have forsaken my well-being.

O God,  
Everyone is a pauper in what he has not;  
But I, in what I have.

O God,  
Even though I am not very obedient,  
Still I have no one but you.

O God,  
There is no limit to your grace.  
There is no tongue capable of uttering thanks to you.

O God,  
Ask us not what we have produced  
that we should not be perplexed!  
Ask us not what we have done  
that we should not be disgraced!

O God,  
Seek not from us obedience to you,<sup>6</sup>  
for we are not capable.  
Speak not of our worthiness of you,  
for we are too ashamed.

O God,  
Outwardly I am disheveled  
and inwardly I am in ruins.  
My breast is aflame  
and my eyes atear.  
At times I burn in the fire of my breast  
and at times I drown in my tears.

O God,  
From your victim flows no blood.  
From one burned by you rises no smoke.  
He who is killed by you is happy to be killed.  
He who is burned by you is glad to be burned.



O God,  
 You commanded us to obey you  
 and then prevented us from doing so.  
 You forbade us to disobey you  
 and then made us disobedient.  
 You who are slow to anger and swift to make amends,  
 You have raised the banner of imperfection over our heads.

O God,  
 You summon us down a path in which are pitfalls.  
 If I fall into a pit, what fault is it of my companions?

O God,  
 What is it to have mercy on the obedient?  
 What is the value of mercy when it extends to everyone?

O God,  
 If Satan taught man evil,  
 who provided him with the wheat?<sup>7</sup>

O God,  
 You are ever-present.  
 Why then should I search?  
 You are ever-mindful.  
 What then should I say?

O God,  
 You see and know:  
 You are able to bring everything to fruition.

O God,  
 You do whatever you wish.  
 What then do you desire of this poor wretch?

O God,  
 When the ocean of your favor swells and billows,  
 whose treachery remains uneffaced?  
 When you look with the eye of mercy,  
 whose sins remain apparent?

O God,  
 Although Heaven is bright and beautiful beyond compare,  
 without the vision of you it is painful and searing.  
 Although musk is sweet-scented,  
 it has not the life-giving breath of your odor.  
 A beautiful and pleasant station is Paradise,  
 but it has not the splendor of your lane.

O God,  
 If I devote but a moment to you,  
 how then could I fancy houris and mansions in Paradise?

O God,  
 Beauty is yours alone:  
 All else is hideous.  
 Ascetics are given Heaven as a wage.

O God,  
 If my body is a sinner,  
 my heart is obedient.  
 If I am an evildoer,  
 Your clemency is my intercessor.

O God,  
 Would that Abdullah had turned to dust  
 that his name could be effaced from the register of  
 existence!



Yesterday I came and accomplished nothing.  
 Today no market was brisk because of me.  
 Tomorrow I shall go, unaware of mysteries.  
 Had I not come, much better would it have been!

O God,  
 Everyone fears you,  
 But Abdullah fears himself,  
 for all that comes of you is good,  
 But what comes of Abdullah, bad.

O God,  
 If all the world be caught in a whirlwind,  
 let the lamp of good fortune be not extinguished.  
 If all the world be flooded,  
 let the scar of ill fortune be not washed away.  
 Open to us a door to your acceptance  
 that be not shut again.

O God,  
 The rich pride themselves on gold and silver,  
 while the poor make do with what you have allotted.

O God,  
 Others are intoxicated by wine:  
 I am intoxicated by the cupbearer.<sup>8</sup>  
 Their intoxication is epheral,  
 but mine abides forever.

O God,  
 Whether I am drunk or whether I am mad,  
 I am among those who reside at this threshold.  
 Give me knowledge of myself,  
 for I am a stranger to all existent things.

I am intoxicated by you.  
 I am free from the draught and goblet.  
 I am your bird. I am free of the grain and the snare.<sup>9</sup>  
 You are what I seek in the Kaaba and the idol-temple.<sup>10</sup>  
 Otherwise, I am free of both these states.

O God,  
 In the stream of that which you will flows water.  
 What remedy is there for that which you will not?

O God,  
 You cast pearls of purity into Adam's lap.  
 You smeared the dust of rebellion on Satan's brow.  
 These two natures you mingled together.  
 We humbly confess that we have done wrong.  
 Blame us not!  
 It was you who stirred up the dust of temptation!

O God,  
 For a long time I sought you and found myself.  
 Now I seek myself and find you.

You were stealthily apparent, and I unaware.  
 You were hidden in my breast, and I unaware.  
 To the exclusion of all the world I sought you openly.  
 You were the whole world, and I was unaware.

O God,  
 I am aware of my own inability.  
 I bear witness to my own helplessness.  
 All will is yours. What can I will?  
 I want not eternal life from you,  
 I want not the good things of this life,  
 I want not my heart's desire or my soul's repose.  
 What I desire of you is whatever is your pleasure.



O God,  
My heart labors for your sake.  
Were it otherwise, of what use is a snuffed-out lamp?

O God,  
What must I do to know you?  
My heart's blood pours from my eyes.  
I have no key to unlock the door.

O God,  
Since a dog has audience at this court  
and a stone may look upon you,  
why is Abdullah despondent?  
All this is given through your beneficence;  
were it not so, why speak of the dog and the stone?

O God,  
I may not be among your saints,  
but like the dog of the Sleepers of Ephesus,<sup>11</sup>  
I am at your gate.

O God,  
When you had the flame of separation,  
why did you kindle the fire of hell?

O God,  
To sin in the face of your generosity is contemptible  
because your generosity is eternal  
and sin is of the moment.

O God,  
What grace is this that you have bestowed on your friends?  
Whoever recognizes you finds them,  
and whoever finds you recognizes them.

O God,  
If you wish to burn Abdullah,  
then it will take another hell to consume him.  
If you wish to soothe him,  
it will take another Heaven to give him rest.

O God,  
I am annoyed by those acts of obedience  
that cause me to be proud:  
Happy that disobedience  
that brings me to my knees.

O God,  
To converse with your friends is like cool water on the soul.  
To converse with other than them is torment to the soul.

O God,  
The rose of Heaven is a thorn in the feet of mystics.  
What cares he for Heaven who is searching for you?

O God,  
If the night of separation is dark,  
we still rejoice,  
for the morning of union is nigh.  
Nonexistence was unaware of the morning of union  
where I and your love were together.  
If by day I see no one in whom to confide,  
what difference does it make whether the night,  
when I grieve for you,  
be long or short?

O God,  
You called, and we were slow.  
Alas! alas! what we did we did in poor judgment.



KHWAJA 'ABDULLAH ANSARI

O God,  
We are wholly ignorant and wholly weak.  
If you would only call,  
that is what we hope for.  
If you drive us away,  
we shall obey your command.

O God,  
You called me weak, and it is so.  
Whatever comes to be on my account is thus.

O God,  
You exist. I exist not.  
Can that which exists not demand something  
from that which exists?  
Who am I to do such a thing?

O God,  
Everyone is lost in you.  
I am anxious for you.  
When you are with me,  
I am as lost as everyone else.

O God,  
You are all.  
We are nothing.  
You are mindful.  
We are heedless.  
This is all that needs be said:  
Be not strict with us.

O God,  
You are disposed to forgive,  
while I am sinful.  
Place me in the end at your court.

INTIMATE CONVERSATIONS

I know I am not righteous,  
but place me in the end with the righteous.

O God,  
'Though I may be an offender,  
I am a Muslim.  
If I am a sinner,  
I am regretful.  
If you want to punish me,  
I'll obey your command.  
If you have mercy,  
I deserve it.  
Whether the Beloved gives us agony or pleasure,  
whatever comes from the Beloved is good.  
We do not think of good or evil—  
our intent is His pleasure and contentment.

O God,  
Since all is as you will,  
what do you desire of this helpless weakling?

O God,  
While you were hidden,  
I was all flaw.  
When you came forth from the unseen,  
I emerged from fault.

O God,  
I know not whose daily bread I hold in my hand.  
I know not in whose hand is my daily bread.

O God,  
What you sewed I put on;  
what you poured into the cup I drank.  
Nothing has come of that for which I myself have striven.



O God,  
If you chastise me for my sins,  
I'll chastise you for your clemency  
because your clemency is greater than my sins!

O God,  
Everyone fears what may happen tomorrow,  
but Abdullah fears what happened yesterday.<sup>12</sup>

O God,  
If the pure must beg forgiveness,  
what must the impure have to do?  
There where the eagle will be overturned,  
contemplate how the owl will be.

O God,  
You beggar is happy in what he does  
because your beggar is a king in this world and the next.

O God,  
If our souls pass away in melancholy over you,  
it is that same melancholy that causes the soul to wax.

O God,  
When there comes a trace of your love,  
all other loves fade away.

O God,  
Your glorious Book is a keepsake from you.  
Since you are present therein,  
what need is there of a memento?

O God,  
Smoke does not signal fire  
or dust the wind

so much as does the external show the internal  
and the apprentice the master.

O God,  
We rejoice in the grief that comes of loving you:  
we flourish in the plunder of your tribulations.

O God,  
There is no joy without pain from you;  
there is no freedom except in bondage to you.

O God,  
I tremble like a willow at the thought  
that I may not be of worth.

O God,  
Everybody fears the day of retribution,  
but Abdullah fears the day of pre-eternity<sup>13</sup>  
because what you decreed in the beginning  
will never be changed in the end.

O God,  
When near to you they give signs of you  
from which you are far away;  
when far from you they only imagine,  
but you are closer than the soul.

O God,  
What sort of intoxication has overcome your select friends  
that whoever finds himself  
finds you  
and turns his back on all else?

O God,  
What is more painful than for the beloved to be rich  
and the lover poor?



O God,  
Had he not sought aid in your favor,  
how could the son of Amram<sup>14</sup> ever have asked to see you?

O God,  
You are the manifestation of religion,  
and your friends are mirrors.  
One can see religion in those mirrors.

O God,  
I possess that mirror in which you are reflected.  
Rather, I am that mirror.  
You are not separate from me.

O God,  
If we are judged by our words,  
then I am a king over all.  
If we are judged by our actions,  
then I am as helpless as a mosquito and ant.

O God,  
Who am I to desire you?  
Being aware of my own lot, I am less than whatever I may  
think  
and grow worse with every breath I take.

O God,  
If it is necessary for you,  
Abdullah will do whatever is proper.  
If it is necessary for himself,  
Abdullah will do whatever is improper.

O God,  
The agony of loving you is a calamity.  
Calamity from the hand of the beloved is a boon,  
and to complain of a boon is wrong.

O God,  
I am helpless and perplexed.  
Neither have I what I know  
Nor know I what I have.

O God,  
Being such as I am, my search for you is blasphemous.  
What am I to do?  
My heart is impatient to know you.

O God,  
Of the period of expectation  
there remains but a day.  
Of the pain of separation  
there remain but a sting in the heart.

O God,  
You have said that you are generous.  
Therein lie all our hopes.  
Since you have said that you are merciful,  
we are forbidden to be despondent.

O God,  
Should I complain of what is?  
Or of what isn't?  
It is absurd to complain of what is.  
It is wishful thinking to complain of what isn't.

O God,  
Without the vision of you, Paradise is a prison.  
To take a captive to prison is not the act of the clement.

O God,  
We are so humiliated that we have dust on our heads.<sup>15</sup>  
We are so regretful that our hearts are filled with agony.  
We are so ashamed of our sins that our faces are pale.



O God,  
If I have not been a friend,  
I have not been an enemy either.  
Although I persist in sinning,  
still I confess your oneness.  
No matter how much you take away from me,  
I take nothing away from you.

O God,  
I have bought what you offered me:  
Of this world and the next  
I have chosen your love.

O God,  
Patience has fled from me,  
my endurance has become feeble.  
I have become a dormant seed:  
It is restlessness that has sprouted.

O God,  
You are the way-station;  
Your friends are the way.  
Therefore, neither does my heart ask forgiveness  
nor is my tongue speechless.

O God,  
All fires are cool in loving You;  
all favors are agony without Your grace.

O God,  
Although people think You are distant,  
You are nearer than the soul—  
yet You are more sublime than any token  
that may be given of You.

O God,  
Those who labor for wages are content with You,  
but those who know You are indifferent to past and future.

O God,  
The soul is drowned in the visible sea,  
the body is veiled,  
hearts are in ruins,  
and eyes are faulty.

O God,  
People run from affliction to joy.  
I am afflicted with joy.  
Everyone fears for himself in joy.  
I am at one with You.

O God,  
When the sea of Your favor billows,  
how is it possible for the offenses of the disobedient  
to show through?

O God,  
You did shape us as You Yourself desired.

O God,  
I am neither happy nor patient,  
I am neither healthy nor ill,  
I am neither close nor deprived.

O God,  
When I came to know You,  
I was cut off from people  
and became raving in the eyes of the world.  
I was hidden, but now I am found.



O God,  
When I do not speak to you,  
I become heavy-laden.  
When I do speak to you,  
my load is lightened.

O God,  
This world is all deception:  
Love of it is worse than of Satan.

O God,  
You are capable of everything from nothing;  
of everything, you resemble nothing  
that one might say, "He is like *this*,"  
or, "He is like *that*,"  
for you are the Creator of *this* and *that*.  
The celestial spheres are tamed  
by your decree.  
The neck of the Universe is held in check  
by the leash of your control.  
The unruly are bound by you.  
The rebellious are broken by you.  
Hell is your prison.  
Paradise is your garden.  
In the heavens is your kingdom.  
On earth is your command.  
You are hidden within the heart.  
You are visible in the next world.  
All power and majesty are yours.  
At the Resurrection  
the obedient are robed with your beneficence.  
The patent of all who enjoy good fortune  
bears your signature.  
The heart seeks no remedy from the soul  
for the pain inflicted by you.

The soul seeks no release from its agony in loving you.  
Unless we speak out to someone  
of the grief inflicted by you,  
The odor of our seared passions will not disgrace us.



If you bring us to trial, we have no defense.  
If you burn us, we have no endurance.

From a slave comes only sin and debaseness.  
From a king comes bounty and mercy.

O Bestower of grace who has no need of anyone's exaltation,  
O Bestower of favor whose bounty knows no end,  
O Granter of ease with whom no one enjoys patronage,  
O Avenger whom no one can deceive,  
O Almighty against whom the unruly can mount no resistance,  
O Seer from whose affliction no wayfarer can escape,  
O Generous one, except for your bounty,  
your slaves must appear empty-handed.

Protect us lest we go astray.  
Lead us to the way lest we wander.  
We are negligent, but we are not unbelievers.  
Lead us to rectitude, for we are destitute.  
Gather us together, for we are scattered.

O Generous one, bestower of bounty,  
O Seer who forgives sin,  
O Eternal who is apart from our comprehension,  
O One who is without peer in essence and attribute,  
O Creator who guides those gone astray,  
O Omnipotent who is worthy of godhood.  
By your ever-abiding essence,

By your perfect attributes,  
By your power and majesty,  
By your splendor and beauty,  
Give to our souls your purity.  
Give to our hearts desire for you.  
Give to our eyes your light.  
Grant us, of your mercy, what is best.

O Lord,  
Give life to our hearts through your mercy.  
Give remedy to all pain through patience.  
How does this humble slave know what ought to be said?  
You are omniscient: Give whatever you know.

O God,  
No tongue is capable of expressing thanks to you.  
There is no shore to the ocean of your grace.  
The mystery of your reality is not revealed to anyone.  
Lead us on that road than which none is better.

O Lord, I want a sign of the straight path.  
I want life from the matter of water and clay.  
Since you have made me enjoy your favor,  
I want a tongue with which to thank you.

O God,  
Destroy the foundation of our *tawhid*,<sup>16</sup>  
withhold water from our garden of hope,  
torment us for our sins.

O God,  
Cast the dust of shame on our heads;  
chastise us for our own evil.



O God,  
Ahead lies danger and there is no way back.  
Hold my hand, for I have no refuge save your grace.

O God,  
To be and not to be are the same to me:  
Bring me from the whirlpool of grief to the shore of joy.

O God,  
You commanded us to look upon the poor and needy  
with the same eye as we look upon the rich,  
but you are too generous  
to regard the disobedient in the next world  
the same as you will regard the obedient.

O God,  
Give us heart to lose our lives in your labor,  
give us courage to do the work of the next world.

O God,  
Give us possessions lest the door of greed be opened to us,  
give us strength lest the sparrow of avarice become a hawk.

O God,  
Give us knowledge lest we stumble along the way,  
give us sight lest we fall into a pit.

O God,  
Take me by the hand, for I have nothing to present to you.  
Accept me, for I am unable to flee.  
Open a door, for you open all doors.  
Show the way, for you show all ways.  
I give my hand to no helper,  
for all are transitory:  
only you abide forever.

O God,  
Give me the next world, that I may abhor this one,  
give me success in obedience that I may be firm in religion.

O God,  
Give knowledge in which there be not the fire of desire,  
give action in which there be not pride and hypocrisy.

O God,  
Give us eyes to see your lordship,  
give us heart not to choose to worship other than you.

O God,  
Give us courage to place the ring of slavery to you  
in our ears,  
give us courage to taste the bitterness of your wisdom.

O God,  
To find you is our desire,  
but to comprehend you is beyond our power.

O God,  
The sincerely devoted take pride in loving you,  
and those who long and pine hasten toward you.  
Through them you perform what others cannot do;  
you fulfill their wishes, which others cannot do.

O God,  
Give a cure, for from these stricken ones no cure comes,  
give success, for from these languid ones no success comes.

O God,  
Teach us to recognize knowledge:  
Light a lamp lest we remain in darkness.



O God,  
Preserve us all from the wiles of the devil.  
Make us all aware of the plots of the self.

O God,  
Give water to what you have sown,  
make flourish what Abdullah has sown.

O God,  
Show us your face  
that we may look upon the face of no other,  
open a door that we may knock at the door of no other.

Give me deliverance from the bonds of my self, O Lord.  
Give me freedom from my evil self, O Lord.  
I am a stranger: Make me to know myself.  
Give me knowledge of myself, O Lord.

O God,  
This is not living: It is torture;  
this is no life: It is a foundation on water.  
Were it not for your gaze of favor,  
all that we do would be in ruins.

O God,  
In this world the disobedience we do  
makes your beloved Muhammad sad  
and your enemy Iblis<sup>17</sup> happy.  
If you torment us at the Resurrection,  
again your beloved will be sad and your enemy happy.

O God,  
Don't give your enemy two occasions for happiness  
and your beloved two occasions for sorrow.

O God,  
If you would but once call me your slave,  
my joy would surpass the Throne of Heaven.

O God,  
If chicory is bitter, it is still from the garden;  
if Abdullah is a sinner, he is still one of your friends.

My heart beats ever with desire for you;  
my soul in my body breathes ever for you.  
When plants grow over my dust,  
let every leaf redolate with the aroma of my fidelity to you.

O God,  
All want to look upon you.  
Abdullah wants you to look upon him.

O God,  
Do not throw down the banner that you yourself raised.  
Since in the end you will pardon us all,  
do not shame us from the beginning.

Your perfect kindness forgives all our faults.  
The ring of slavehood to you is in all our ears.  
Lift, O Lord, of your grace, the burden of sin,  
from all our shoulders on the day of tribulation.

O God,  
We stand as a pawn on this chessboard:  
Wherever we place our rook, a knight charges us.  
Since our queen of obedience goes astray,  
at that hour when we shall be checkmated by death,  
preserve us from the elephant-faced demon.<sup>18</sup>



O God,  
Neither are you unjust that I should say, "Beware!"  
nor do you owe me anything  
that I should say, "Let me have it!"  
Since you raised me up in the beginning,  
put me not down in the end.  
I am your guest: Keep me as you will.

O God,  
Give us whatever you will.  
If you do not will wheat, then give us bread!

O God,  
Preserve Abdullah from three afflictions:  
from the temptation of the devil,  
from the desires of the flesh,  
from conceit in ignorance.

O God,  
You made Creation gratis.  
You provided sustenance gratis.  
Have mercy on us gratis:  
You are God, not a merchant!

I am a disobedient slave. Where is your pleasure?  
My heart is dark. Where is your light?  
If you grant us Paradise in accordance with our obedience,  
that is barter. Where are your favor and bounty?

O God,  
If you send us to hell, we'll raise no objection.  
If you send us to Paradise, unless your beauty be there,  
we'll not have it.  
Fulfill our desire, for all we seek is union with you.

On Doomsday lovers have no concern for Resurrection.  
Lovers have no concern but to behold union  
with the beloved.  
If I am taken from your lane toward Paradise,  
I'll not place my foot there unless I have a promise  
to see you.

O God,  
Grant us protection that we may dwell in the lane of your  
love;  
grant us a tongue with which we may render you thanks.

O God,  
Bu-Jahl comes from the Kaaba,  
and Abraham from the idol-temple.<sup>19</sup>  
Everything depends upon your favor:  
The rest is just pretext.

O God,  
There is light in obedience,  
but everything is by your favor.  
We must have your mercy:  
The rest is empty fable.

There where divine favor is,  
iniquity is an ascetic's labor.  
There where omnipotent wrath is,  
the Muslim devotee is a churchman.

O God,  
If I am not worthy of the trust,  
on the first day you knew what I was like.  
Forgive my sorrowful heart,  
for humanity is torment in my religion.



With your eternal knowledge you saw me.  
You saw what you were buying, in spite of my faults.  
You and your knowledge.  
Me and my faults.  
Don't send back what you once approved.

O God,  
Extinguish not this lamp ablaze;  
sear not this heart aflame;  
rip not this curtain sewn;  
drive not away this neophyte slave.

With every breath I take I sin against you a hundredfold,  
Yet out of your loving kindness you disgrace me not.  
I am worse than the worst in the world:  
Of your kindness you have had mercy on evil me.

O God,  
If I am among your friends,  
remove from me this sense of obligation.  
If I am among your guests,  
keep me well.  
Have mercy on this sorrowful heart.  
Put me not in a quandry.

O God,  
By virtue of the fact that you have no need,  
have mercy on one who has no defense.

O Lord,  
Of your generosity, have mercy on my state.  
Have mercy on my incapable heart.  
Place rest and repose in my agonized breast.  
Have mercy on my tear-stained eyes.

O God,  
Give certainly in which there be no doubt  
and knowledge that be not without illumination.

O God,  
Of your grace give Abdullah wine,  
that his vision be not clouded by his intellect.

O God,  
We were behind a veil,  
and you were screened by the unseen.  
When you appeared you brought us forth from our faults.

O God,  
If you raise me to the gallows, let it be,  
but exile me not!  
If you send me to hell, that is your pleasure,  
but send me not away from you!

O God,  
There is no necessity for me to fly for refuge:  
Before me lies danger, with no way back.  
Take my hand: I have no asylum but you.

O God,  
I come to your gate as a slave—  
my lips full of repentance,  
my tongue asking forgiveness.  
If you will, ennoble me by your generosity.  
If you will, demean me,  
for I am ashamed and you are the Lord.

O God,  
That which I desire is not so much as a pace for you.  
Since your generosity is all-pervasive,



if you would glance once my way,  
then all would be done.

O God,  
I have bound myself to you to the exclusion of all else.  
If you would have me, I will worship you.  
If you would have me not, I will worship myself.  
Make me not despondent: Take my hand!

O God;  
If I am raw, cook me!  
If I am cooked, burn me!

O God,  
Your reckoning is with those who have,  
and I am a dervish.  
If your accounting is with paupers,  
then I come before anyone else.

O God,  
What value have I to be worthy of you?  
If you will, chastise me.  
If you will, forgive me.  
You hold the key: How should I open the door?

O God,  
Whoever gets along with you is called mad.  
Whoever is concerned with himself is a stranger to you.

O God,  
I have a secret door to you:  
I see a veil and think it a revelation.  
If it is reality, keep me not in doubt.  
If it is negligence, make me aware.

O God,  
Sorrows are joyful with the memory of you.  
Happiness is delusion without the sight of you.  
Give felicity in this world,  
for Resurrection is a long way off.

O God,  
Since you are the bestower of mercy,  
take everyone's hand.  
Why question us for what we have done?  
Sober or drunk, take us as we are.

O God,  
What am I to do with Paradise?  
What games am I to play with the houris?  
Give me an eye to make a Paradise of my every glance.

O God,  
When I look at you, I am proud;  
when I look at me, I am lost;  
when I look at my self, I melt.  
Look upon us that we may discard the baggage of duality.

O God,  
In our hearts plant only the seed of love for you.  
For these souls destine only grace and favor.  
Send down on these fields only the rain of mercy.

O God,  
Smear our brows with the dust of shame,  
but let us not be chastised with your affliction!

O God,  
Finish what you gave a taste of.  
Make perpetual this lightning you made shine.  
Couple the beginning of this felicity with its end.



O Lord,

What I, a mere beggar, desire of you  
is more than a thousand kings could wish.

Everyone has a request to make of you,  
but I have come to ask you for yourself.

O God,

By the sanctity of that name which you know,  
by the sanctity of those attributes which you are like,  
hear our plea, for of that only you are capable.

O God,

Preserve us from four things:  
disgrace on the Day of Reckoning,  
inattentiveness when you speak,  
deprivation when you give audience,  
being veiled from the sight of you.

O Lord,

Provide me with repentance.  
Provide me with obedience worthy of you.  
Before I finish my labor in this world,  
provide me with freedom from this world and the next.

## *The Song of the Dervish*

O God, the *qibla*<sup>20</sup> of those who know is the sun of your  
face.

The *mibrab*<sup>21</sup> of all souls is the arch of your brow.  
The Masjid al-Aqsa<sup>22</sup> of all hearts is the sanctuary of your  
lane.

Glance in our direction, for our gazes are upon you.

The world is an abode of affliction and trial,  
not a place of rest and repose.  
Where is there room here for joy and gladness?  
To be mindful of God in every condition  
is then the key to salvation.

Vexed is the seeker after this world.  
Rewarded is the seeker after the next world.  
Glad is the seeker after the Lord.

He who desires the world is mad.  
He who desires Heaven labors under a pretext:  
The goal is the Lord of the House.  
Some have ambition of attaining Heaven:  
Some desire the Beloved.  
Happy is he whose banner reads "ALL IS HE"!

O Paradise,  
I am not concerned with you: Don't be so long-winded!  
O Hell,  
I am not afraid of you: Don't tell me about yourself!  
What is happiness?



To be concerned with loving God  
and to rid oneself of love for Creation.  
Do you know who the traveler on the true road is?  
He is one who knows what poverty is.

To be a dervish means to be a lump of sifted earth  
with a little water sprinkled on top.  
It means to be something that  
neither harms the soles of the feet  
nor leaves a trail of dust behind.

What is poverty?  
An unhypocritical exterior  
and a peaceful interior.  
The poor has neither name nor shame.  
He knows neither peace nor war.  
The poor has water in the well  
and bread in the unseen realm.  
He has neither a concern in his head nor gold in his pocket.

This rank is not attained by putting on a cloak and cap.  
This felicity is attained by the striving of an enlightened  
heart.

If one abandons the rigor of knowledge  
for the delights of the black-eyed houris,  
the purity of his knowledge is shattered.  
If a dervish seeks anything other than God Himself  
from God,  
the door to His response is closed.

What a happy abode is nothingness!

If you walk on water, you are wet.  
If you fly in the air, you are a fly.  
Fall in love in order to be somebody!

Fasting to endurance is a way to save on food.  
Vigil and prayer is a labor for old women.  
The pilgrimage is an occasion for tourism.  
To distribute bread in alms is something for philanthropists:  
Fall in love:  
That is doing something!

Knowledge is a shoreless ocean  
in which the knower's soul is a signpost.

Hallaj<sup>23</sup> said, "I am God" and crowned the gallows.  
Abdullah said, "God" and was crowned.  
What Hallaj said I too have said.  
He said it aloud.  
I, silently.

He who knows three things is saved from three things:  
Who knows that the Creator made no mistakes at Creation  
is saved from caviling.  
Who knows that He made no favoritism in allotting fortune  
is saved from jealousy.  
Who knows of what he is created  
is saved from pride.

Look to what you do,  
for that is what you are worth.  
True labor means neither fasting nor prayer:  
True labor means defeat and needfulness.

What grief does the humble have for his daily bread?  
He who conceals his affair is given no less;  
He who seeks openly is given no more.  
That which God has allotted neither increases one iota  
nor occurs one instant sooner.



KHWAJA 'ABDULLAH ANSARI

Beginners have speech on their tongues.  
The advanced have neither the power to speak  
nor the means to express.

If I am silent they will say I am mad.  
If I speak they will say I am a stranger to reason.

God's favor comes unexpectedly,  
but only to an alert heart.

Put not your hope in people,  
for you will be wounded.  
Put your hope in God  
that you may be delivered.

Strive to become a man and one who knows pain.

O God, what have you given one  
to whom you have not given reason?  
What have you not given one  
to whom you have given reason?

Be intoxicated but do not cry out!  
Be fulsome but do not fulminate!  
Be humble and silent:  
A sound jug is passed from hand to hand,  
but a broken one from shoulder to shoulder.  
If you want salvation, become afflicted!  
Seek the remaining after annihilation.  
If you have, rejoice!  
If you have not, seek!

## Notes